

Cultivating Process Improvements From Army's Grass Roots

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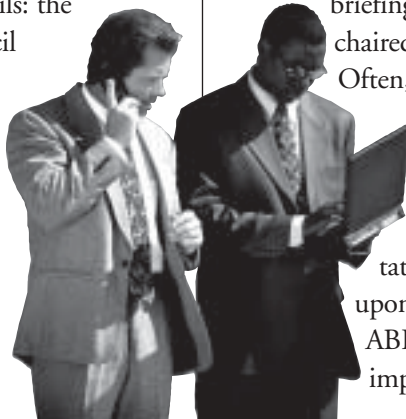
BEST BUSINESS

PRACTICES



Have you ever had an idea that you thought would improve an Army or DOD business process, but never did anything about it? What if you knew that the Secretary of the Army (SECARMY) could review and approve your idea only 45 days after the submission deadline? Things happen when you submit suggestions to the Army Business Initiative Council (ABIC). The ABIC team processes proposals that provide efficiencies and cost avoidances by promoting savings. Ultimately, achieved savings can be retained and reallocated within the submitting organization, and it all starts with your proposal.

On June 18, 2001, Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld announced the creation of two new councils: the Senior Executive Council (SEC) and the Business Initiative Council (BIC), the latter of which reports to the SEC. The BIC is chaired by the Under Secretary of Defense (Acquisition, Technology and Logistics).



Principal BIC members include the military service secretaries, Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Under Secretary of Defense, Comptroller and Chief Financial Officer and Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness.



Army BIC

To efficiently gather and forward initiatives from the Army to the DOD BIC, the Army developed its own BIC process. Led by Executive Director Donald C. Tison, the ABIC process begins with the submission of initiatives to a Web site; proceeds with submission assignment, review and staffing by one of the six functional area boards; and concludes every 90 days with a decision briefing at the ABIC meeting chaired by the SECARMY.

Often, new initiatives apply to Army-specific processes rather than DOD processes. In these cases, implementation plans can begin upon approval from the ABIC. For DOD-wide implementation,

ABIC-approved initiatives are forwarded to the DOD BIC functional boards for consideration and approval by the BIC principals. From ABIC commencement through the Cycle 5 decision meeting, the ABIC and/or the

BIC principals have approved 67 initiatives originating from the Army.

Policy and Congressional Action

Don't let the prospect of legislative or policy obstacles keep you from submitting a BIC initiative. The ABIC has policy and legislative analysts who can assist with composing and circulating policy directives and legislative language for statutory changes. For example, the ABIC has prepared and submitted an FY05 legislative proposal to authorize a "Cell Phone Subsidy." If passed, this legislation will authorize monthly stipends to employees who were previously authorized and issued a government cellular phone to conduct official business calls. By encouraging employees to use a personal cellular phone in lieu of a government-issued cellular phone, the government will no

longer be required to issue, track and account for government-issued cellular phone equipment, and employees will no longer have to account for official calls or carry two cellular phones.

With the approved legislation, authorized employees will be able to use their personal cellular phones and receive monthly stipends to offset the cost of official calls. This will lead to improved quality of life because authorized cell phone users will be able to select their level of service without concern about impact to the government. In addition, the cycle time to secure and activate a phone will be reduced, and performance will be improved from a customer perspective.

Submitting a BIC Initiative

To submit a BIC initiative, you must have senior executive service or general officer approval for your idea. For smaller organizations, a senior level official — O-6 or GS-15 — in that agency can also approve BIC initiative submission. Typically, each organization has one designated BIC point of contact (POC). To find out who your BIC POC is, or if your organization even has one, check the BIC Web site at

[http:// www.asafm.army.mil/rabp/bic/intro/pocs/pocs.asp#macom](http://www.asafm.army.mil/rabp/bic/intro/pocs/pocs.asp#macom) or

contact the ABIC Support Team at (703) 601-4196. If your organization must designate a BIC POC, the ABIC Support Team can provide assistance.

Your BIC POC is authorized to submit initiatives directly to the Army's BIC submission Web site. The deadline for initiative submission is 45 days into each cycle, with four cycles per year, each lasting approximately 90 days. For example, the Cycle 7 submission deadline was in December 2003, with the SECARMY's decision meeting for initiative approval in February 2004. The initiative submission deadline for Cycle 8 was April 12, 2004, and the Cycle 9 deadline is Aug. 12, 2004!

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Send Your Process Improvement Ideas Today

When submitting a BIC initiative, information covering the following areas must be submitted to the Web site in paragraph or bullet format:

- Description
- History/current situation
- Pros (+)
- Cons (-)
- Risks
- Metrics
- Cost/benefits
- Costing methodology
- Required policy/congressional action
- Executive summary

The following six functional boards at HQDA review and evaluate proposals and assist the ABIC in selecting initiatives for implementation:

- Acquisition management
- Information technology
- Installations and logistics
- Manpower and personnel
- Resource management
- Test and evaluation

The BIC is looking for ideas in these areas as well as others. The SECARMY encourages you to be an agent of change. Write down your business process transformation ideas and submit them to your BIC POC today.

For more information regarding ABIC, log on to Army Knowledge Online. On the left side of the screen under the heading **Army Communities**, click on **Financial** and then click on **Business Initiative Council**.

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